



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Dr. Helga Konrad

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 17, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Dr. Konrad for your comprehensive report.

The United States is looking forward to participating in tomorrow's conference on combating child trafficking and we support the increased OSCE attention on this aspect of trafficking, and hope that the conference will provide constructive input for our Sofia-mandated negotiations on an addendum to the Action Plan on Combating Trafficking and that addendum would then cover the protection and assistance of child victims.

We believe that this addendum should be concise and practical. It should outline basic principles that all our countries can use to develop policies that address the special needs of the child trafficking victim.

We have all agreed on the need to strengthen our efforts to combat trafficking in human beings; what we need now is to go beyond rhetoric, beyond speech and to now move into the world of action.

In this regard, we support visits by Special Representative, Dr. Konrad to various OSCE States to see what assistance the OSCE can provide to States' anti-trafficking efforts. We would ask Dr. Konrad for more information on her trips, both in terms of consulting in advance and also in terms of reporting on the results of the visit and any follow-up action or projects that result from these visits.

We also want to see to it that an annual meeting of National Contact Points or other appropriate high-level representatives be organized as mandated by the Anti-Trafficking Action Plan and by the mandate of the Anti-Trafficking Mechanism that was adopted in Maastricht. And we believe that planning for such a meeting should be undertaken now.

While we support this week's conference on child trafficking, we still look forward to such a National Contact Point meeting, the purpose of which would be very different from the purpose of tomorrow's meeting. We believe such a meeting should focus on building the very type of cooperation and networks among government representatives that Dr. Konrad mentioned in her statement here this morning. We would envision that high-level representatives from various parts of our governments – not only Foreign Ministries but also Justice and law enforcement agencies for example – would attend.

Finally, we will circulate a food-for-thought paper in the very near future which will contain our ideas for such an event. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.